



## Representative **Bill Eickmeyer**



# A Report to the 35th District

*September 1999*

Dear Neighbor:

Thank you for your interest in my report on major activities in the 1999 Legislative Session — and major responsibilities for the 2000 Legislative Session.

### **1. Rural economic recovery**

Remember in my newsletter last year when I talked about the unfortunate fact that our state is becoming a New Appalachia? I pointed out that the economic disparity between our rural regions and the urban regions is at least as bad — if not worse — than anywhere else in the country. Well, this year, the Legislature got down to the business of doing something to change that sorry fact.

**One big victory in this year's session is a perfect example of seeing a problem — the rural region's plunge into deeper economic quicksand — and doing something about it — passing legislation to encourage economic-growth and job-creation.**

**House Bill 2260 is the centerpiece of our efforts to turn things around for working families who live where Seattle's good economic times don't mean a thing.** I was proud to be the prime sponsor of House Bill 2260. The legislation emphasizes the need for a good, solid infrastructure to help rural communities snap back and keep people working in good, solid jobs. Through the terms of House Bill 2260, we expect to see 200 new jobs at the Satsop Industrial Park by January of next year.

Terms of the legislation double the amount of money rural counties — such as Mason and Grays Harbor — can use for infrastructure improvements. Mason and Grays Harbor could keep up to .08 percent of their sales-tax receipts — instead of the previous .04 percent authorized two years ago.

Companies that want to build in new areas are interested in whether prospective communities have a high-quality infrastructure. And companies already established in a community might be encouraged to expand or stay open if the community has an appropriate infrastructure. The extra money can be used to build or improve bridges,

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Economic Development, Housing & Trade,  
*Democratic Vice Chair*  
Children & Family Services  
Natural Resources

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roads, water systems, sewer systems, railroads, port facilities, and other components of their infrastructure. I worked with Republican co-sponsors to write the measure.

**Another provision in the new law is aimed at bringing high-tech businesses to hard-hit timber, fishing and other rural communities.** Help-desk businesses, call centers, software-assembly firms and related high-tech companies will be encouraged to locate in rural areas with a tax incentive.

Still another measure has been signed into law to send additional assistance for projects involving telecommunications infrastructure. This boost went through our House Economic Development, Housing & Trade Committee for which I serve as Democratic Vice Chair.

To help me in my job as your state representative, I have been appointed to two committees. One is the Joint Legislative Committee on Economic Development, which is headed by Lieutenant Governor Brad Owen, and the other is the Governor's Small Business Improvement Council.

## 2. Responsive government

I was pleased to win support for legislation directing that Washington citizens living or traveling out of state don't need to renew their driver's license here in person. It all started last year when a woman who lives in our legislative district got in touch with me to explain a driver's license problem troubling her.

The woman works in Italy for the United States Department of Defense, and she needs to keep a Washington driver's license to keep her Defense Department job. That meant she'd either lose her license (and her job) or have to travel back to the state of Washington just to renew her license.



Now, the new law in House Bill 1212 further says that driver's licenses for Washington dependents of military personnel would stay in effect — dependents wouldn't have to renew them in person at a driver's license office — as long as their spouse or parent is in the military. **This is called responsive government — common-sense government.**

A Washington resident, like his or her family member in the military, would have to renew his or her driver's license in person within 90 days after the military service is completed. Other Washington citizens, like the woman in Italy, who are out of state for work or travel for a year or less could get their license extended by writing to the department. If they expect to be out of state for more than a year, they could write the department and ask to renew their license.

**I was very pleased to participate in the governor's bill-signing ceremony for House Bill 2260 — economic-development legislation for which I won support in the Legislature.**

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## 3. Not everything was rosy

It wasn't all peaches and cream in this year's legislative session. I made several attempts at getting Kitsap classified as a "distressed county" — for the purposes of qualifying Kitsap for the sort of financial infrastructure help noted above. We wanted to make sure Kitsap is covered when large numbers of military personnel leave town, for example. But since we couldn't secure majority support, we'll have to keep at it next year.

**You don't have to be a big-shot economist to see what an impact it has on Bremerton and the rest of Kitsap County when large numbers of military people and their families leave.** Their departure causes a slump in our regional economy. But, unfortunately, that slump doesn't show up in the unemployment statistics — so Kitsap doesn't get assistance other areas receive when they experience business closures and job losses.

## 4. Hood Canal

Some people look at Hood Canal and shake their heads, despairing of the fact that the canal, according to the Department of Natural Resources, is practically a "dead zone" for salmon, steelhead and other fish species. But I look at the canal and see a "world-class fishery." And I'm optimistic that the canal can become a must-visit for fishers from all over the world, if only people will just exercise a little patience.

This year, I backed a plan to declare Hood Canal a sanctuary, closing it to all fishing until we have full or at least significant recovery. My plan, which didn't make it through the process this past session, would set up a Hood Canal Coordinating Council — comprised of representatives from Mason, Kitsap and Jefferson counties — to keep an eye on the fish stocks. The council would file a report on how the runs are doing after a two-year period so we can see if shutting off the canal has helped. **We should keep a close watch on Hood Canal to get the wild-fish runs back up to sustainable levels.**

I'll keep at it next year because I'm convinced we can make Hood Canal a world-class fishery that will draw people — and their checkbooks — from all over the world.

**Salmon-recovery can be a big part of economic-recovery efforts in our rural and small-town region.**

## 5. Next year's session

In addition to the unfinished business noted above, here's an important topic already on my plate for the 2000 Legislative Session: Privacy issues.

We've got to make sure that the private, very personal information contained in our bank accounts, credit-card accounts, health records, purchasing habits, and other realms stays private. **Right now, though, a lot of these types of personal details are being sold to private companies who use the information to try and sell us something — and goodness knows what else they do with it.**

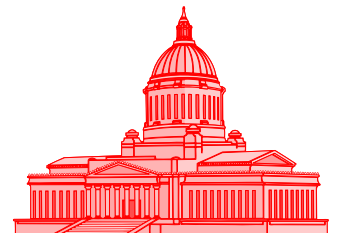
I support legislation to protect bank accounts and credit-card accounts and other information sources from this exploitive pillaging.

**Again, let me say how proud I am to help represent our 35th Legislative District. We are working together on these and related issues. And, believe me, I always appreciate it when you and your neighbors share your concerns.**

Sincerely,



**Bill Eickmeyer**  
State Representative  
35th Legislative District



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## A Report to the 35th District

I'm very proud of the work of these young people, who I sponsored as pages this year in the House of Representatives:

Tyler Buntain, Olympia  
Crystal Carnell, Olympia  
Dustin Ensign, Tumwater  
Samantha Marshall, Shelton  
Natalie Quist, Shelton  
Katie Rorie, Montesano  
Hunter Schwiser, Lacey  
Nathanael Shoemaker, Shelton

Their families and communities have every reason to be proud of them, too.

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